



TOWN HALL | 3 EAST MAIN ROAD | PERU, MA 01235

SELECT BOARD MINUTES | January 6, 2020 6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Present:

Verne Leach, Chairman
Ed Munch, Selectman/Historical Commission
Bruce Cullett, Selectman/Police Sergeant
Caleb Mitchell, Town Administrator
Justin Russell, Highway Superintendent
Jeff Henault, Chief of Police

Residents: Wally Dolle, Jennifer Shears Dolle, Jesse Pelkey, Dawn Pelkey, Coralie Pelkey, Lauren Steele, Charlie Goyette, Colleen LaRochelle, Darryl Darby

Item 1: **Call to order:** 6:00 p.m.

Item 2: **Roll Call:** Chairman Leach present, Selectman Munch present, Selectman Cullett present

Item 3: **State recording status:** Mr. Leach and Irene Morrison recording

Item 4: **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 12/16/19 and 12/30/19**

Mr. Leach motions to approve the 12/16/19 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**
Mr. Leach motions to approve the 12/30/19 BOS Meeting Minutes. Mr. Cullett seconds. All agree **VOTE 3-0**

Item 5: **Report from Departments**

Highway – Supt. Russell reporting

Supt. Russell said the truck body was supposed to be delivered today, so he's going to send the truck to NY tomorrow morning. He said there are still a lot of problems with the 550. It was supposed to go back to Johnson's last week, but with the ice storm, he had to keep it here. He said on the 1994, there is a nut that came off the pinion on one of the driveshafts where he found oil leaking out of the transfer case, so he's been waiting for a special bolt to come in for that. It took some time to get that part. He said that will be back together tomorrow. Tentatively, the 550 is scheduled to go back to Johnson's. He's thinking of calling Marcotte in Chicopee. He's heard a lot of good things about their Fleet Service there. He said we need to get to the bottom of what's wrong with that truck and why it won't run right.

Mr. Munch told Supt. Russell the tree that's next to all the wires coming into the town, the branches are growing up into the telephone wires, cable wires. He said the top of that tree needs to get pruned. He asked that Supt. Russell look at it. Mr. Cullett said he could probably get it with a pole saw.

Town Administrator – Caleb Mitchell reporting

TA Mitchell updated the BOS on the Cafeteria Plan. There is a sign-up scheduled for this Tuesday and Friday. There has to be 3 people signed up, otherwise there will not be a Cafeteria Plan. He said to date there has been no-indication that anyone has come to pick up a packet to review the materials prior to the sign-up.

TA Mitchell has composed a letter of congratulations to Carlton Brooks for his achievements in Boy Scout Troop 21, and in becoming an Eagle Scout. The BOS signed the letter. (*See letter to Carlton Brooks*)

BOS – Mr. Leach reporting

Mr. Leach said he has received a letter from the Peru/Hinsdale Cultural Council Board of Trustees asking that we appoint Kathleen Borden to represent Peru. The Council will have to be contacted to find out what the term should be.

(*See letter from Cultural Council*)

Item 6: Discussion & possible vote to increase the hourly wage for Police Officers

Jeff Henault, Police Chief said the starting pay is \$14.00 for a Police Officer coming in. He asked each of the 4 surrounding towns what their starting wage was. Hinsdale starts their Officers at \$16.47; Windsor \$16.50; Worthington \$18.50; and Middlefield at \$18.00 per hour. He said he has enough money in his budget, and would like to give everyone a \$2.00 raise, and have the starting pay at \$16.00. Coralie Pelkey asked if there were job descriptions, and if the Officer's have been evaluated. Mr. Munch told her that this is not a raise, but it's to get the rate relative to the other towns with the raise in minimum wage. It would become active on 1/1/2020.

Mr. Leach motions to raise the starting pay for Police Officers & to bring the others up to \$2.00 to reflect that. Mr. Munch seconds. Both Mr. Leach & Mr. Munch agree. Mr. Cullett recused. **VOTE 2-0**

Item 7: Discussion of MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Grant offering for MTWP Members

TA Mitchell said since the Town of Peru is a Member of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, there are grant applications available to us up to \$20,000.00 for sustainable forestry and outdoor recreational projects. There is no actual application for that. The one that appears to be suitable for funding under the criteria, is the completion of studies or implementation of projects such as tourist facilities, a wood road, or trail repairs to support natural resources. The BOS wants to try making improvements to Curtin Rd. and the intersection where Curtin Rd. meets Monument Rd. and possibly some parking and some signage to let people know the monument is there. TA Mitchell will put the Grant Application together and submit it.

Item 8: Discussion of 250th Anniversary Celebration

Mr. Cullett has copies of what he has received from Performance Electrical Construction after meeting with them about some improvements behind the Fire Station. He said, "Pete Yetman recommended upgrading the underground power available, adding some lights along the fence line, and supports for some outlets along the fence line as well. That would allow us to have some vendors along the fence line for any future events, most importantly the 250th Celebration. The lighting will work for the 250th Celebration, but also be there for any town function in the future. We can also use the same poles to light up the rear of the highway yard which is completely dark right now. The proposed cost for these improvements is in the neighborhood of \$9,000.00. That would be specific to the Grant that we received from the State."

Mr. Cullett said he has spoken with James Callahan from Callahan Signs a couple times trying to get a budget number for design and installation of a new sign for the Town Hall. It would include an informational sign similar to what the Cheshire Fire Dept. has where we could put a message up on the board in LED's. Mr. Cullett said he doesn't have the numbers yet. He said these infrastructure improvements looking toward the 250th Celebration is the way to go.

Coralie Pelkey asked if those funds could be encumbered. Mr. Munch explained that we have tried to encumber the money and were told the money has to be spent by the end of this Fiscal Year. Mr. Cullett said in addition to that, the service has to be provided by the end of the Fiscal Year.

Laurin Steele said, "We've got \$25,000.00 to spend. He asked if there were any other improvements needed on the lot before the 250th. Mr. Cullett said, "We've talked about some turf improvements, a few improvements to the drainage preventing it from getting soggy if we have a lot of rain. We need to talk with the Parks & Recreation Committee about doing a couple things down there. There's a backstop there. I don't recall when the last time a game was ever played on the field there. The same pile of sand has been there for 3 years. The backstop blocks a lot of that field. I'd like to talk to Parks & Recreation about removing that and opening that area up more." Mr. Munch said he'd like to see a basketball hoop down there. Coralie Pelkey said a few years ago, we had thought of putting a barbecue pit down there next to the pavilion so that you could have barbecues & picnics.

Matters brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law, but not listed on the Agenda

Jennifer Shears-Dolle said she was here to follow up on a BOS Meeting held a few weeks ago about Greylock Circle. She said she talked to Tony Frusiente who told her that in 2018 when the letters were mailed to the residents, he cleared 6 ft. on the side of Greylock Circle. He asked Supt. Russell to meet him up there to go over additional things that needed to be done to the road. He told her that Supt. Russell did not meet him. Supt. Russell said, "It was cut back to where it wasn't hitting the trucks. Tony went by with a cycle bar on his tractor, which only cuts grass. It doesn't cut trees that are hanging down hitting the trucks. None of those were ever cut, nor gravel added to the road." Supt. Russell explained that if they're in the middle of a job, they don't stop to go to another road to look at a tree. "We finish a job, set a time and date to go look at something and we do it. Tony tries to meet him during the day while we're doing work." Wally Dolle brought pictures from his phone over to Supt. Russell to show him the road. Supt. Russell said, "You can't tell exactly what a road needs when it's covered in snow." Mr. Cullett said you can cut back brush this time of year, and you can cut back trees. You cannot fix a gravel road. To give a short history, Greylock Circle is a private road. It's one of a handful of private roads this town has plowed but doesn't maintain. It has been plowed for a number of years. This BOS inherited that situation. What's technically supposed to happen for the town to even plow private roads, it's supposed to be approved at a Town Meeting." Mr. Leach asked Mr. Dolle to meet with Supt. Russell at some time to discuss all this. Supt. Russell told Mr. Dolle to call the Highway Garage, and they'll set up a time. Mr. Dolle said there were no guidelines to tell what had to be cut back. He said he wasn't aware that it was a private road, because their deed says "public." Coralie Pelkey said, "I worry about safety if there's an emergency call over there and they're not able to get access for help. Who is responsible at that time if something happens?" Supt. Russell said if it's during a storm and they're plowing, he hears the call over the radio probably before anybody does and I go to driveways, or any road that needs it immediately. Going into next year, I'm going to draft a letter designated for each one of these private roads that still need major improvement on them." Mr. Munch said, "We don't re-visit this private road thing again. It's 3 times, and a loop that just keeps going around. This should not be brought up again in a meeting. We need to make a decision as a Board on Private Roads in general." Mr. Cullett said, "I think we should bring it to Town Meeting. Let Town Meeting decide whether or not they're maintained in the winter."

Item 9: Review and Approve accounts payable, treasury warrants, payroll warrant

No Warrants

Item 10: Adjourn

Mr. Leach motions to adjourn the 1/6/2020 BOS Meeting. Mr. Munch seconds. All agree. **VOTE 3-0**

BOS Meeting adjourned at 7:12 P.M.

Articles used:

1/9/2020 BOS Meeting Agenda
12/16/19 BOS Meeting Minutes
12/30/19 BOS Meeting Minutes
Letter from Cultural Council
Letter to Carlton Brooks
No Warrants

Respectfully submitted,

Irene J. Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Verne Leach, Chairman _____

Ed Munch, Selectman _____

Bruce Cullett, Selectman _____

Approved: _____